



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
District of New Hampshire*

*Federal Building
55 Pleasant Street, Room 352
Concord, New Hampshire 03301*

603/225-1552

MEDIA RELEASE
For Immediate Release
Wednesday, May 25, 2005

Contact: Thomas P. Colantuono
United States Attorney
Don Feith
Assistant U.S. Attorney
(603) 225-1552

TWO CANADIAN CITIZENS SENTENCED FOR TELEMARKETING FRAUD

CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE -- United States Attorney for the District of New Hampshire Tom Colantuono and Royal Canadian Mounted Police Project Colt Inspector Savario Orlando today announced that David Johnson was sentenced to 121 months and Nelson Azevedo was sentenced to 70 months in federal prison for engaging in a telemarketing scheme originating in Canada that targeted United States citizens. Both defendants will also serve a three year period of supervised release after they are released from prison. During the supervised release period, their behavior will be monitored by the United States Probation Office and they are prohibited from engaging in telemarketing.

Johnson and Azevedo are Canadian citizens from Montreal. Johnson pleaded guilty in 2004 to racketeering, racketeering conspiracy, mail fraud, mail fraud conspiracy, wire fraud and wire fraud conspiracy. Azevedo pleaded guilty in 2004 to wire fraud conspiracy and mail fraud conspiracy.

Seven victims of the telemarketing scheme appeared at the sentencing and told the Court of the impact the fraud has had on their lives. The victims were from California, Mississippi, Wisconsin, New Hampshire, Kentucky and South Dakota. The seven victims were a representative group of the more than 80 victims affected by the fraud. Intended losses from the fraud exceeded \$8 million dollars and \$6.4 million in restitution was ordered.

Assistant United States Attorneys Gretchen Witt and Jean Weld are pursuing a parallel civil forfeiture action, originally filed on October 18, 2002, in which the United States seized \$4.5 million from the accounts of several Middle-Eastern banks. The United States seized the funds under the newly enacted provisions of the PATRIOT ACT, which was enacted by Congress in response to the attack of September 11, 2001. The \$4.5 million in seized funds has been transferred to the United States Marshal for the District of New Hampshire.

— M O R E —

Defendant Norman Redler is scheduled to be sentenced on June 29, 2005 and defendant Adhemar Baptiste's sentencing hearing is scheduled for June 30, 2005. Defendant Guy Desjardins is scheduled to be sentenced on July 26, 2005, and defendants Sylvia Farmer and Kerwin Bentley are scheduled to be sentenced on July 27, 2005.

United States Attorney Colantuono stated: "Telemarketing fraud is a serious crime that warrants the best efforts of law enforcement. I cannot emphasize enough that no citizen should ever send money by mail or wire to a person or business unless the citizen knows the person or business or has initiated contact with that person or business. The telemarketers that created this fraud were professionals that were able to overcome the natural skepticism of their victims. Although this office is dedicated to finding and prosecuting these fraudsters, the best way to prevent fraud is to not allow yourself to be a victim. Ask yourself: Is this too good to be true? If the answer is yes, then do not send anyone any money."

Criminal Chief and Assistant U.S. Attorney Don Feith prosecuted this case.

#